

Occupation of the Langhe Plateau by the GCKA Commands

Taking advantage of an operation at Son La, a commando of 40 men left the

San on 20 May 1953 with the mission of capturing Gocminh. The men reached Palao

on the 26th and, with little advancing, intercept a Viet Minh column of forty

recruited soldiers. Once they had reached the region, the contacts established

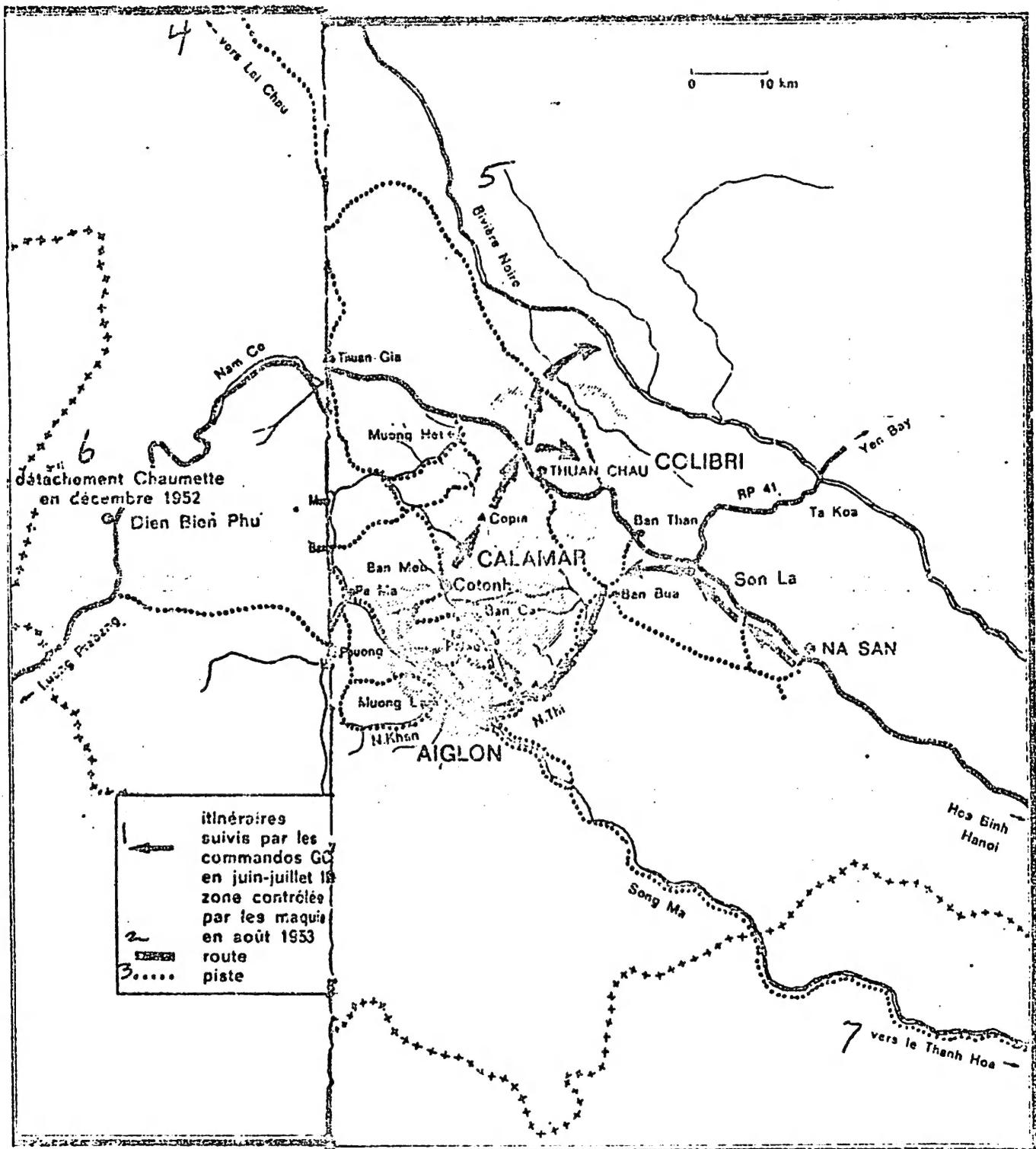
by the Special Missions were confirmed and, on 30 May, the first weapons were

parachuted. On 30 June the command included 250 Thais, and 180 Meos, with

weapons and officers. On 30 September the count was as follows: Colt 1,250

men; Caliber 950 men; RPG 200 men.

Key to map on following page: 1-routes followed by the GCKA commandos in June  
and July 1953 in the zone controlled by the undergrounds in August 1953, 2-highway,  
3-path, 4-to Lai Chau, 5-Black River, 6-Chauette detachment in December 1952,  
7-to Thanh Hoa.

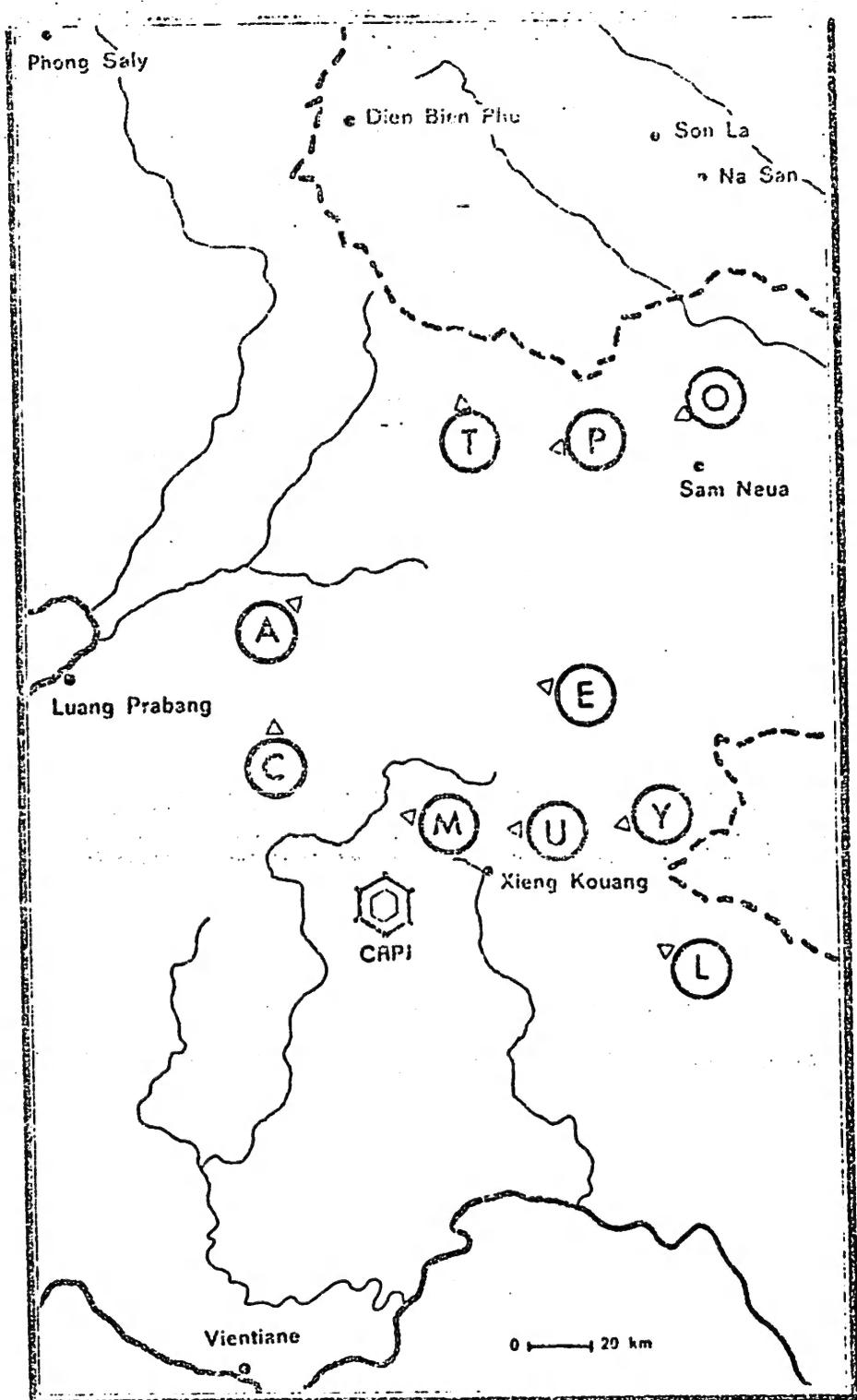


The undergrounds in the Northeast of Laos

Established in November 1952 throughout the mountainous zone of North Laos, the Malo-Servan group protected the evacuation of the San Neua garrison on the Plaine des Jarres in April 1953. The underground perfectly fulfilled the role assigned to it. They collected, sheltered and guided a large number of small and isolated friendly groups in a Viet-infested region to the Plaine des Jarres.

OPERATION	1 EUROPEENS	2 SYM- BOLE	3 PROVENANCE EFFECTIFS
PC OTE	4 C <sup>m</sup> SABBI		7 Mequis et Cdes TRAHN NHH
GT MALO	5 Adj MEYER — DECKSUR Enl KHELIFF — LEGLOND	M	8 Cdes d'instruction KHANG KHAY —
S/GT A	6 Li MESNIER S/C LAZURRE — MAGNST — ORSINI	E Y U	9 AC 201 d'intervention 10 Mequis PHOU DOU 11 Mequis HOHQ HET 12 Mequis LAT HOUANG
S/GT B	Li VANG PAO Sgt PARIS — GUELLEC — SENARD	L C C	10 AC 204 d'intervention 11 Mequis Nord NAM MO 12 Mequis THALINQ 13 Mequis PA FONO
S/GT C	6 S/C LEGRUX Sgt MARCELIN	A	14 Cdes d'intervention 15 Mequis Nord NAM KHAN
GT SERVAN	Li ERTHIER	P	16 Mequis SAM NEUA
S/GT A	6 S/C VERNIERE	O	17 Mequis HOHQ KHANG
S/GT B	— CHEVILLON	T	18 Mequis HOUEI THAO
S/GT C	— FRITZON		19 Mequis Da THI
PC AR	4 C <sup>m</sup> TRAVAUX Sgt VILLO — ERNEY	M	20 PC KHANG KHAY —

Key: 1-Europeans, 2-symbol, 3-origin of men, 4-Captain, 5-side, 6-sergeant-major, 7-underground and commandos, 8-training commandos, 9-201st Intervention Commando Group, 10-underground, 11-204th Intervention Commando Group, 12-intervention commando, 13-command post.



Coordination with Regular Troops

Letter from the GCMA Commander to the Commanding Colonel of ZANO (Northwest Autonomous Zone)

Hanoi, 28 September 1952

Colonel,

On my return to Hanoi I am sending you this personal letter which has the advantage of being faster than an official document, and which is intended to report on the conversation I had with you by snatches today.

The origin of all the misunderstandings between ZANO and the GCMA in the Thai country is a lack of communication and coordination in efforts, which it is very difficult to correct in view of the current situation and our resources.

However, it is extremely urgent that the GCMA and the ZANO units work on a well-established and coordinated plan, so that the resources of each can be used to obtain the best results.

The absence of a GCMA officer, who would be your technical aid for all GCMA operations in your zone, means that you are not informed on activities except by second-hand, by your sector commanders or by the General, whose technical aide I am in Tonkin.

I am not able to send you a GCMA officer who would concentrate all questions of interest to ZANO, and who would constantly keep you up to date on its activities; this is only for lack of resources.

Therefore, to remedy this inconvenience, I propose the following solution to you.

I am thinking of drawing up a rather detailed report of the Hundreds in the Thai country for your next visit, which will particularly specify: their current situation, their resources, their possibilities and their general missions.

Once this is drawn up and account is taken of the situation of the sectors and their possibilities, it will be possible to jointly establish a program of action for the Hundreds, which should also supplement the activities conducted by the sector units.

In this way there will no longer be any encroachment of authority, but a logical complement for the missions devolving on each.

A copy of the reports on the Hundreds will be sent to you through me every month, and this will allow you to follow their development and evolution, and to intervene when you think it useful, either to modify their mission or to give them a new orientation as a function of the situation.

I think this is the only way we can develop a clear and simple program of action, capable of producing the maximum.

R. Trinquier.

## An Underground Mission

Report of the Mission of Sergeants Bourdon and Lautouin, 16 October 1952 to  
13 November 1952

16 October

Departure from Than Uyen at 7 a.m. toward Ho Mir. Arrival at Maloutcrai  
in the evening.

17 October

Departure at 7 a.m. Day without incidents. Arrival near Yen Tang.

18 October

Departure at 7 a.m. R.A.S. (expansion unknown). Arrived at Siao Mi Ti  
in the beginning of the afternoon. We were very well received by the village  
chief. We had three days of rice cooked for us, which took up the rest of the day.  
We spent the night in the village.

19 October

Departure at 7 a.m. Toward the Mong Hoa valley. About 2 p.m. we left the  
path and took a position on a point overlooking the valley.

We sent someone to get intelligence in the valley.

We will not return until Monday the 20th, forcing us to spend the night here.

20 October

When we rose we discovered Chapa and had very extended views toward Fan Si  
Pan.

Return of the scout in the morning. He gave us the following intelligence:

- a) It will take four days from where we are to get on the road for Chapa by  
the route anticipated when leaving Than Uyen.
- b) The presence of the canton chief of Giang Ta Tchay.
- c) Presence of a Viet troop and a police commissar at Mong Hoa.
- d) It is possible that the Chapa Viet Minh will descend into the valley for

political activities. We decided to make raids the following night, 20-21, in the order:

1. Canton chief.
2. Viet troop.
3. Chapa Viet Minh.

The men were informed of the mission and of its manner of execution. Signals for dispersion and regrouping were given.

In the afternoon a Dakota flew over us several times.

6:30 p.m. Departure from our position toward Giang Ta Tchay.

9:30 p.m. We were in the valley near the river. We stopped as expected and stayed in place until 10:45 p.m.

10:45. We again advanced. We crossed the river on a large suspension bridge and continued in the direction of the canton chief's home (an isolated house), which we reached around midnight. There the two groups divided so as to arrive from each direction. Upon our approach the dogs began to bark, and when we reached the inside, it was empty. We found several papers and shells. After five minutes of searching, we decided not to delay and to head for the second objective, i.e., Mong Roa, on the other side of the river. On the way we were to check a small house where there sometimes were Viet troops.

We took the main path rising toward Chapa. About 1 a.m. we were near the house. The chief of the first group headed for the spot with a light team; on their approach a dog barked. An armed Viet Minh opened the door and saw the team. The chief of the group opened fire. Two Viet Minh were killed. It is probable that others succeeded in fleeing. Two rifles were found beside the bodies. The house belongs to a civilian, a friend of the Viet Minh, who was there. No paper was found and no intelligence. We decided to continue toward Siao Mi Ti.

We crossed the river again and avoided Mong Hoa. We were fired on from the other bank. We marched the rest of the night and reached Siao Mi Ti at the beginning of the morning. We always received a very good welcome from the village chief, who had a day's supply of rice brought to us and refused to accept payment. We left him some salt.

21 October

We left Siao Mi Ti and passed by Yen Tang. We spent the night in the forest between Siao Mi Ti and Yen Tang. A Dakota flew over us several times. On this occasion we put out the marker and lighted a smoke pot.

22 October

We departed at 7 a.m. We reached Ma Lou Tchay around 4 p.m. We found two partisans from the Hundred, who informed us that Than Uyen no longer existed, that the Europeans were evacuated to Hanoi by airplane and that the snipers had gone in the direction of Mong Gang. We continued in the direction of Ho Khoa, where we had the intelligence confirmed by the wife of a partisan. We spent the night inside the village.

23 October

When we awoke, we sent a messenger to the village. (He was never to return). We traveled along a ridge of tiger grass, which allowed us to be more or less hidden from view from the ground, but to be very open to the air. The partisan, named Le, told us that most of the partisans wanted to reach Son La, while others wanted to return to their villages.

5 p.m. We decided to set free those who wanted it. We had had no food since morning. The night before the inhabitants of Ho Mit had refused to give us rice.

6 p.m. Mustering of arms; the partisans left us.

6:15 p.m. A Dakota flew over us. We put out the marker and the smoke pot, but the airplane only made one pass.

Disassembly and destruction of the armament of the auxiliaries, which will be unrecoverable. We kept two partisans with us, each armed with an automatic pistol. We left the place and went toward a railroad hut to spend the night.

Friday, 24 October

Toward midnight we set out for Ho Khoa. On the way we found an old man who was very willing to guide us. The path is scarcely visible. We spent the night in the forest.

Saturday, 25 October

We continued our journey and, while going through a pass, a partisan abandoned us because the path was guarded by some Du Kich, and we had to split up. The second partisan, Li A Pao, met us in the evening at his home, where we had come to take refuge.

Sunday, 26 October

On the request of the parents of Li A Pao, we set out in the afternoon for Lang Can, each with a week's supply of rice. We reached the village at night. Pao proposed to go scout the passage through the village. We waited for him for the rest of the night, but he did not return. Reconnaissance in the village did not teach us anything.

Monday, 27 October

We decided to go back to the partisan's home at Ho Khoa. When we arrived near the house, three men ran away. We did not find Pao, but everything suggested that he had returned to his home. In the evening his mother, who had stayed alone, left us and carried away her bedding. We knew that four Du Kich were in the vicinity. We spent the night hidden in the house.

Tuesday, 28 October

4 a.m. We departed in the direction of Lang Can, which we went through.

Beyond this village we were chased by five Du Kich. We headed for Nam Khan. After the river had been crossed, only two Du Kich followed us. We did not want to fire for fear there might be some in front of us. We hid in a straw field. They passed by and came back an hour later. We had kept them in view, and they were looking for us. We continued our journey. We spent the night on a knoll in the straw field.

Wednesday, 29 October

We left in the direction of Nam Khan. We passed through the village and spent the night in an abandoned, isolated house.

Thursday, 30 October

We looked for our path toward Nam Mong. We spent the night in the forest. We reached the village where a brave Mao offered us a meal of hot rice. After this rapid breakfast, we continued toward Nam Ma. We passed through it. We spent the night in an isolated house.

Saturday, 1 November

We departed in the direction of Khe Co Mi. We were not pursued any longer, but we were bare-footed. We made ourselves some shoes with strips cut from tent-cloth. We entered the village without being able to avoid it. Having been spotted, we decided to enter a house in order to eat. The inhabitants were Mans. We got some cooked rice to carry away in a piece of cloth. We ate a little on the spot.

Three men came in and greeted us, presenting us with a paper (Viet Nam Doc Lap) (1) [Translator's note: This looks as if it should be a footnote, but there is none] and inviting us to smoke the waterpipe. These were Du Kich who took us for European Viet Minh. We left them quite rapidly with a show of friendly signs. They appeared surprised at our abrupt departure. We continued on a good path. The region is rich in rice, but our path ended at a railroad. A Man led us on the good

path leading to Khe Co Mi. He also took us for Viet Minh.

We passed Khe Co Mi without being spotted, and reached the Ban Nhun river. We hid ourselves and waited for night to pass the ford and the village.

10:30 p.m. Moonlit. We passed the river. We did not find the path. We heard voices in the village. We crossed a bamboo fence. On the other side a path ran along the fence. We took it so as to circumvent the village. At the end of a very short distance, we were whistled at and hid in some brush. A Viet Minh armed with a rifle looked for us, saw us and pointed his weapon in our direction. Bourdon jumped on him, disarmed him and stretched him out on the ground, while Baudoine prevented him from sounding the alarm. He looked for his knife and slit his throat. The Viet died without an outcry. We hid the body and left again. We passed by a branch of the river where a large number of paddy mills were operating.

We came out at a place and saw on our right a row of quarters. A second sentinel was here, crouched close to a fire with several other people who were humming. We raised our weapons in the shoulder straps. They did not question us. Thus we went through the sleeping camp. We found ourselves again on the Lao Kay path (many tracks in the direction of Lao Kay). We left it after about three kilometers to go in the direction of the Red River.

It would take us four days to reach it. We ate what rice was left. We were getting weak.

Sunday, 2 November

Nothing.

Monday, 3 November

Still in the brush.

Tuesday, 4

We ate some banana tree hearts.

Wednesday, 5

Some reeds.

Thursday, 6

We finally reached the River.

Friday, 7

We made a raft out of bamboo with parachute slings which we had previously saved.

At 8 p.m. we put our raft into the water and shoved off. After several hours, which seemed interminable to us, we were forced to stop. We were cold and wet.

Saturday, 8 November

We spent the day hidden on the side of the river. In the evening we left again. We passed through some rapids, and our raft overturned. We persisted a little longer than the first night, but we were forced to stop because the cold kept us from moving at all.

Sunday, 9 November

We spent the day hidden in the reeds. We were getting hungrier and hungrier. Our strength was diminishing. In the evening we resumed our descent on the raft. In the morning we stopped and hid our raft.

Monday, 10 November

We spent the day hidden. In the evening we left at 10 p.m. to paddle. At dawn we heard the noise of a motorbike-type engine and occasionally a stronger engine. The noise stopped at daybreak.

Tuesday, 11 November

We stayed hidden all day. Some troops came to machinegun and bombard a little below us.

In the evening at departure time we could not find the raft. Fortunately the paddle which we had hidden separately was still there. We took a fisherman's

bamboo boat, which was tied up, and took off again. We reached Yen Bay, but did not know it until later. There was a great deal of animation on both banks, which were lit by torches. The motor we had heard in the morning was the engine of a ferryboat which was on the right bank when we passed it. A truck rolled onto it with its headlights lit. On the left bank another truck was going away. Wounded were being transported on both banks. There was a great deal of noise; a lot of women's voices. On the river a barge loaded with dead and handled by women passed close to us. For about three hours of our descent the animation remained the same on the two banks, which were always lighted, as were the villages. Several times two or three men, who appeared responsible for studying departures upstream, stopped us. We made believe we were deaf; finally only fires about a kilometer apart were visible. These heavily loaded vessels had two or three men or women. By 5 a.m. we had passed about 200 or 300 of them. We stopped at dawn.

Wednesday, 12 November

We stayed hidden all day. We found some radishes which we ate in a hurry. Some B-26's came to bombard from noon to evening. We left again in the evening. We took along some radishes and some sugar cane. There was no movement on the river, except for fishing boats. Rowing became more and more painful. The current was slow. We stopped at dawn.

Thursday, 13 November

We found an abandoned house of the type used for quarters. Individual holes bordered the river. We decided to scout the area. On the ground we noted tracks of brush shoes. We got on the dike and saw caterpillar and tire tracks. Five minutes later we heard bursts of a 12.7 and vehicle engines. No longer able to walk, we decided to take to the river again and follow the left bank. About 45 minutes later we saw some smoke. We stopped after 200 meters and debarked. We saw two snipers who told us that they belonged to the 7th Company of the 2nd Muong. We were very

well received by the Captain commanding the unit, who sent a message for us to the command post. In the evening we were directed to the command post of the 3rd Composite Group, and interrogated by the intelligence officer. We spent the night at the listening post.

Friday, 14 November

We were sent to the command post of the FDNV (North Vietnam Ground Forces) at Hanoi.

S.P. 73428, 24 November 1952,

Signed: Baudoin.

Key to map on next page: 1-to Lat Chieu, 2-Black River, 3-to Thanh Hoa.

vacuation of Na San, Action of the GOMA Commandos  
The undergrounds are to facilitate the evacuation of the entrenched camp of  
Na San by occupying Son La by surprise. Captain Hebert, assigned to Na San since  
1 August 1953, directs the operation himself. On the night of 3-4 August Captain Chatelet's  
partisans enter Son La, the rear base of the 86th Viet Cong Regiment. The latter,  
positioned around Na San, attacks on the 4th to recapture the town. Hebert allows  
them to enter Son La. But Chatelet's partisans block the highway to Na San, while  
Chatelet harasses the 86th day and night in Son La. Ansidi's underground fighters  
occupy the most important pillboxes, evacuated by the regular battalions, and  
certain support points, while Sergeant Pallet's partisans take a position on the  
mountainous plateau four kilometers south of Na San. Thanks to this combined  
action, evacuation of the entrenched camp can be made without loss.



4-Viet Minh attack (word(s) missing), 5-GOMA withdrawal

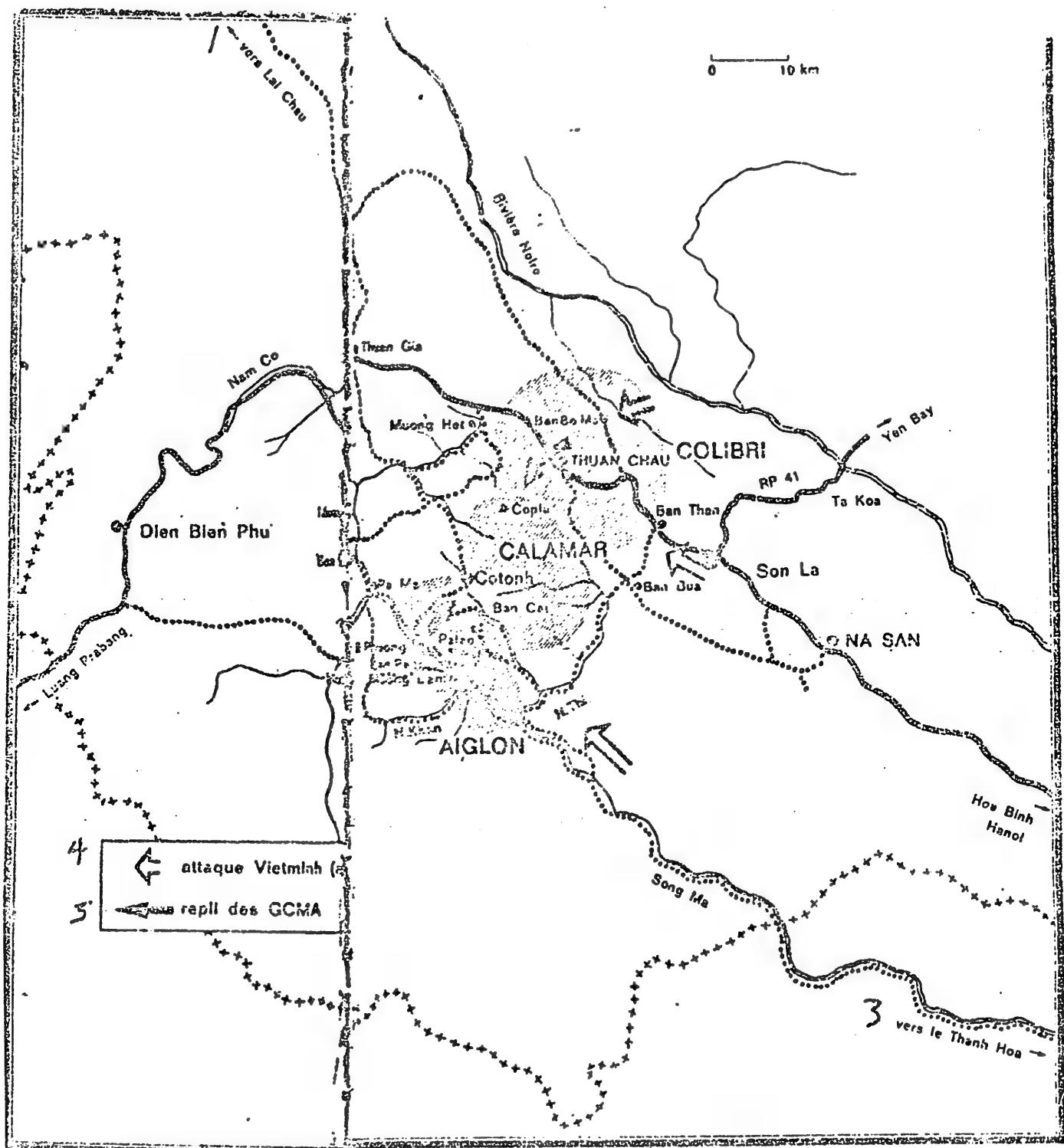
Key to map on next page: 1-Toward Lat Chau, 2-Black River, 3-Toward Thanh Hoa,

and to let the storm pass.

The 316th prepares for the underground attack. Since the 88th Regiment has fallen, the 316th division becomes more and more engaged against the underground fighters at the beginning of November. The attack is directed on two principal axes, the valley of the Song Ma toward Huang Lien, and RP (Provost-Central Highway) 41 in the direction of Thanh Chau. On 20 November the best received the order to suspend the underground

After the successful evacuation of Ha San, the Viet Minh systematically

The Battle of the underground roads



that its most intense local summer heat to leave them alone for the benefit of the Delta "front". It will also give

Second an increase in its role as a storage and distribution center of Chinese food  
The undertaking will also have other results. It will show the Vietnamese

On the strategic plane, the destruction of the stores of Ccc Leu would allow the French Command to agitate among and to agitate the Viet Minh preparations for an offensive. Since the raid on Lang Son, Lao Kay, where the Yunnan railway ends, has

against the large enemy base. The Vietnamese parachutists, dropped so far from their bases, could not be numerous, about one battalion. Scattering and the aid

In view of the number of the troops used, the importance of the raid launched on Leo Key cannot be compared with that which succeeded brilliantly at Lang Son. At that time there were more than 1,000 men who had been launched

In view of the number of the troops used, the importance of the raid

A number of air attacks had "prepared" the terrain.

tion, which is currently in process and proceeding favorably.

The attack was launched Saturday in the early hours of the morning. Dropped in the right bank of the Ked River, opposite Lao Kay, the paratroopers began the assault in groups of 30 to 40 men. But they were repulsed. This first reversal did not prevent the paratroopers and the partisans from conducting a new opera-

Hamot, 5 October. A commando raid of extraordnary courage has just been launched behind the Viet Minh lines near Lao Key, 225 kilometres northwest of Saigon. No French are participating in this attack, conducted by Vietnamese partisans and Meo partisans against the stores of arms, munitions and food of the Viet Cong.

Commands of Vietnamese Partisans Purachieved later also key

### ress Extract

The Lao Kay Raid

new Vietnamese units confidence in their offensive spirit at the very moment when they have been receiving rude blows in the Bui-Chu region.

"Le Monde", 6 October 1957

#### The Lao Kay Highway Bridge is Destroyed by Vietnamese Parachutists

What were the objectives of the Vietnamese parachutist raid on Lao Kay? Yesterday it could have been believed that it was a matter of a simple "coming and going" raid. The French Command had indicated and announced that the parachutists were turning toward the Delta. Nothing came of it and, even if this first assault on Saturday had not been able to surprise the Viet Minh who repulsed it, it was different for another attack which supposedly took place yesterday, Tuesday.

Reorganized in the hills with the help of the Meo mountaineers, the parachutists sowed confusion among the enemy, who believed them to be retreating. Penetrating into the center of Coc Leu, they went as far as the highway bridge which is used by the food convoys coming from China, and they blew it up under massive air support. According to some information the bridge, 300 meters long, could not be repaired for several weeks.

According to a Reuter dispatch, the Vietnamese Commandos would now return "to its bases" across the mountains. The United Press affirmed last night, on the contrary, that "according to the latest news the commandos are holding the position they took despite quick communist reaction".

In the Delta of the Red River the Vietnamese units remain the favorite target of the Viet Minh. At dawn on Tuesday, after having harassed about 20 posts, the enemy succeeded in taking one of them south of Colonial Route 5, Hanoi-Haiphong, during the very night when the operation Brochet took place. Thirty men from the small Vietnamese unit which occupied the post were able to regain our position.

Lossees are not supposed to have been very heavy. According to the Fireman-Presse Agency, only three or four of the "miderground fighters" were wounded. The Presse Agency does not specify whether this term applies only to the Thiat partisans or to all of the attackers, including the parashutists. Anyway, in order to draw up a balance sheet, it is necessary to wait for the return to our lines of the

### **Maxima of destruction.**

SECRET/1 hundred  
This is how the combat can be reconstructed: dropped at 9 a.m. on the 11th of the month, the paratroopers first attacked the Co Leu unit. The Co Leu unit had been dropped at 7:26 a.m. avoiding the Chinese territory, bombed Lao Kay and Co Leu at the same time.

The small number of regular Vietnamese groups engaged in the raid shows how limited the objectives were. It is true that, according to some information,

The Franco-Vietnamese General Staff Considered the Conference on Lao Kay a Success; A spokesman for the French Command declared that the Conference on Lao Kay was a success; they indicated that 46 rice paddies, villages and the departmental who commanded them would now regain our lines in small groups.

Самые яркие из них

In the But-Chu sector attacks continued against the Tigris-Ortakase.

parachutists who will have to make their way through the Viet Minh zone.

In the Bui-Chu sector, the Red River Delta, the situation continues to preoccupy the Command. It is known that this region had been entrusted to new Vietnamese battalions who underwent repeated attacks by the Viet Minh. The latter has been able to bring up new reinforcements and now has several battalions available in a sector which our troops had liberated during the operation "Tarentaise". It now appears that the French General Staff, after succeeding in eliminating the "stain" of Hung-Yen, will be obliged to mount a new operation to retake control of the Bui-Chu region.

"Le Monde", 9 October 1953

2) All of the specialists "in action" coming from France, paratroopers with  
TAP or not, if they make their regular jumps have an air pay like the TAP person-  
nel; and

1) All the GM people, paratroopers with certificates, whether they are in  
obtain in France is:

don't jump are a priority objective) is doing nothing to prevent me. What you must  
happy to see taken: . . . . . and which the MINTS Stageon (all these people who  
everything is. . . about the subject of the air pay which the TAPI would be very  
. . . . . revealed all of my difficulties in the attached report. Basically  
"Travel of Colonel Sauvageac.

return, and this period of temporary adaptation will pass very rapidly with the  
Fortunately this entire team is reaching the end of its tour and will  
. . . . . , to getting away from him.

On the other hand General Gille, who wants to be in charge of everything,  
which has gained and is still training respect everywhere.

case of General Gille, and this is only based on mean jealousy against our shop,  
Here the TAPI is giving proof of the worst will, especially the General  
the subject of the representations on GM because of its separation from TAPI.  
will receive the attached report (transmitted by Colonel Director Delegate, on  
radio at Atropou in South Laos) to quickly send you this letter. In a few days you  
I am taking advantage of the departure of Tostain (who has just left the  
My dear Mollerane,

Stageon, 20 February 1954

Letter from Colonel Trainer to Colonel Mollerane of SDCE

The transformation of SDCA into GM

3 The Liquidation

certificates, and in particular those who have already served in the GMI or those from the 11th shock unit, be assigned to me. At the present time those coming from the 11th shock unit or the former GCMA members are not being assigned to me on the pretext that I have reached my quota of parachutists. We are counting on you for this problem.

You must have received my quarterly report.

At first I was disappointed because none of those supposed to receive it spoke to me about it. It took a month to reach General Navarre. But as soon as he learned of it, the result was very clear; everything that I asked for has been granted to me:

Credits for 30 supplementary companies of auxiliaries, and

I am going to receive ten officers and 20 noncommissioned officers in addition, which will bring my table of organization to 83 officers plus two native officers and 214 noncommissioned officers.

I have established a very detailed plan (appendix) to use these new hands.

So you see that the shop is solidly established now. It counts and will count more and more. After a short time we will be one of the best trumps of the Commander-in-Chief.

Finally I am surprised that you have not replied to my two last personal letters on the subject of my request to come back here after a furlough, the length of which is to be determined.

Actually my normal tour ends in May. Therefore it is necessary for me and for the GMI for me to be assigned. The personnel established by Grall and by myself, all of the old valuable men, will return. They are the brains of the shop which must be replaced. New ones must be chosen if we want the shop to prosper. What we are getting at the present time are only stopgaps. I have a whole mine of people in my former 2nd ECCF team who adapt easily and who would certainly come if I asked them. Most of them have come back to the AOF (expansion